



Guidance Notes for Faculties, Departments and Institutes

PART-TIME RESEARCH COURSES

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INTRODUCTION

This document provides information and guidance for those wishing to admit part-time students. Part-time students are subject to the same regulations, policies and procedures as full-time students, with some exceptions which are detailed in this document. You should refer to the *Code of Practice for Graduate Research Degrees* (<http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/new-students/manage-your-student-information/graduate-students/code>) and formulate your own local arrangements for part-time students within this framework, appropriate to the subject and the specific requirements of the mode of study.

This document refers to the part-time PhD Degree. Provision has also been made for a part-time route to the MSc, MLitt and some MPhil degrees and to the Certificate of Postgraduate Study. Arrangements for these qualifications are as for the PhD with variants as set out in the timetable and the amended regulations. Note that the term 'part-time student' below refers to part-time PhD students.

Please note that there is no part-time route to the EngD degree.

1 Framework

1.1 The Qualification

The qualification obtained is the same, whether by part-time or full-time study.

1.2 The minimum research requirement

For the PhD, this is fifteen terms (five years). This means that students must study for at least 5 years. For other degrees and the CPGS, see the table in section 5, below.

1.3 Residence requirements

There are no residence requirements for part-time research courses but there are minimum attendance requirements which will include formal supervisions and training (see 4.3 and 4.4, below). Potential candidates should be made aware that this is a part-time rather than a distance learning course; it is expected that students will live close enough to Cambridge to play a full part in the academic and social life of the Faculty or Department and the College.

1.4 College

Every part-time graduate student must be a member of a College. He or she will be assigned to a Graduate Tutor who will be available to advise on welfare or pastoral matters in the same way as for full-time students.

1.5 Fees

The total University Composition Fee for the course is the same, whether taken by the full-time or the part-time route. In practice, this normally means that 60% of the full-time fee is charged for each term of Registration as a part-time student. Students should also be aware that there may be additional costs, e.g. travel and short-term accommodation.

1.6 Relationship to full-time provision

Part-time students are intended to be additional to, and not a replacement for, full-time students. You should only offer the part-time route where it is unlikely to distort full-time provision and if the necessary resources can be made available.

2 Departmental Arrangements

2.1 Setting up a new part-time course

When setting up a new course, Faculties and Departments will be asked to confirm whether the course will be offered as part-time or full-time (or both).

2.2 Applying to admit part-time students on to an existing course

Faculties and Departments who wish to extend provision to admit part-time students on to an existing course must apply to the Board of Graduate Studies for permission to do so, using the application form available from <http://www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/graduate-information-university-staff/information-degree-committees-and-departments/part-time>. The Degree Committee would need to support the application.

2.3 Resources

Research facilities must be no less (in quantity, quality and availability) for part-time students than for full-time students, whether provided in the University or in the students' own place of work. If you wish to admit part-time research students you must confirm that you have enough laboratory, library and seminar room accommodation for the additional students, and sufficient administrative and clerical capacity to manage them.

2.4 Supervisors and Advisors

Supervisors are appointed by the Degree Committee in the same way as full-time students. Supervisors should be made aware before taking on a part-time student that

- the commitment is a long term one, and can last for up to ten years;
- the student may have other commitments (domestic responsibilities, paid employment) - the Supervisor is asked to keep the balance between these elements under review;
- it may be difficult for the student to attend induction, training etc at the same time as other students; the supervisor should ensure that suitable arrangements are made;
- regular progress reports should be submitted via CGSRS (as for full-time students);
- a Progress Log must be completed throughout the length of the course (see Section 4.5).

A second person should also be appointed to act as an **Advisor** (see the Code of Practice for details).

2.5 Health and safety and pastoral care (see also 4.8 Student Support)

Part-time students may need to work outside regular hours. You should ensure that health and safety arrangements are adequate to cover this if necessary. Part-time students must have access to pastoral and advisory facilities. In practice much of this will be provided through the College.

2.6 Integration

It is the University's intention that the part-time research course should be as much like a full-time course as possible. Please make every effort to involve part-timers in the academic and social life of the department. You should make arrangements for part-time students to

be immersed in an active research environment including formal training in research; attendance at relevant seminars and conferences; participation in transferable skills training; and interaction with researchers in the same and cognate disciplines. For example, you might consider re-timetabling, where appropriate, so that part-timers can be integrated with full-timers; evening sessions and weekend conferences could be considered; and part-timers might be encouraged to supervise undergraduates, if appropriate.

2.7 Concurrent courses

Students who are studying, or intending to study, part-time in Cambridge are not normally expected to pursue a course at another institution simultaneously, but exceptions may be made providing the Degree Committee is satisfied that the arrangements will not hinder the candidate in pursuit of the Cambridge degree.

3 ADMISSION

3.1 Candidates

A typical candidate might be employed in the University or in the Cambridge region with an employer who views a programme of part-time research as representing valuable staff development; or might be someone who works part-time or is home based for whatever reason, and wants to develop his/her research skills.

As a general rule, overseas students who require a visa to study in the UK will not be able to obtain a visa for a part-time Degree. However, you may receive applications from an overseas candidate who is employed in the UK with a work permit, or who is an accompanying dependant of such a person. You will need to check that they have permission to remain in the UK for a sufficient time to complete the minimum research requirement before considering such applicants. The International Student Team (internationalstudents@admin.cam.ac.uk) can provide advice if required.

Academic standards are comparable to those for full-time students, The University standard minimum entry requirement is a Ili Honours Degree, but the Board recognises that some part-time students may have quite different educational histories from full-time students and may agree to accept candidates with different but equivalent qualifications or experience. Degree Committees will need to make a case for 'non-standard' applicants in the usual way.

Departments and Degree Committees must decide in advance if they have **higher** requirements than the minimum. These can be set out in the graduate prospectus.

You will also need to agree your expectations as regards attendance requirements (see below).

Please bear in mind that there is no obligation on any supervisor or Department to admit any candidate to part-time study if they judge that part-time study in a particular set of circumstances, or for a particular project, is inappropriate. Each case should be considered on its own merits.

3.2 Application procedure

Part-time applicants apply using the online application form as with full-time applicants (<http://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/how-do-i-apply>). Applicants are asked to provide a statement saying why they need to study part-time.

Instructions for referees include a request for a statement about the ability of the candidate to handle different responsibilities simultaneously. (Please note that references from a current line manager are not acceptable if the relationship does not include knowledge of academic ability.)

3.3 Interview

You must **interview all candidates** for part-time research degrees and a report of the interview should accompany the recommendation of admission by the Department. A pro forma for this purpose is available on the BGS website at <http://www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/graduate-information-university-staff/information-degree-committees-and-departments/part-time/>, but as long as you retain the existing content you may adapt it as you wish to fit in with departmental styles/requirements.

Please note that the aims of the interview are to determine the academic suitability of the candidate and discuss the feasibility of the part-time route. Points that might be covered at interview include:

- Suitability of the project to part-time study, including currency of research;
- Management of time, and the extent to which the applicant would be able to manage their work and study;
- Pattern of attendance including arrangements for supervision and training;
- Proposed home location and whether this is close enough to allow the student to fulfil the attendance requirements and play a significant part in the academic life of the department;
- Fees and funding arrangements;
- Intellectual property ownership.

3.4 Arrangements with employers

Employed candidates are asked to provide a letter from their employer stating that they will be allowed time off, if necessary, to attend the University as required for the whole duration of their course. The letter should also state whether or not the employer will wish to discuss intellectual property rights in connection with the research (see next section).

If research for the Degree is to be conducted in the workplace, candidates must agree this with their employer and with you; you should check that the supervisor will be granted reasonable access to the workplace on request.

3.5 Intellectual Property Rights

For employed candidates, arrangements for Intellectual Property Rights must be agreed in advance. It is best to discuss this at the interview if not before.

If the employer is not asserting any rights in the intellectual property created in the course of the research, a statement to this effect must be included in the letter at 3.4 above. We would generally expect this to be the case where the employer is neither paying for the time of study nor contributing to fees. In the absence of any claim on the IP by the employer, the position on IP is identical to that of a full-time PhD student. More information on Intellectual Property Rights is available on the Board of Graduate Studies website at <http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/examinations/graduate-exam-information/submitting-and-examination/phd-msc-mlitt/research#ip>

If the employer wishes to claim rights in the IP, the Research Operations Office (<http://www.research-operations.admin.cam.ac.uk/>) must be contacted in advance of the studies to negotiate an agreement which sets out the position on IP and, among other things, confirms the level of any sponsorship by the employer. While the employer may

wish to retain ownership in any IP created by the student, the University will also want to ensure that regard is given to the IP rights in any contributions from the supervisor or other members of the Department, as well as its obligations to other external sponsors. The University will also wish to make sure that the employer cannot restrict the use or exploitation of the student's share in any collaborative project in which s/he takes part, nor prevent the submission of the thesis on grounds of confidentiality.

3.6 Financial arrangements

Candidates must produce a signed financial undertaking that they can cover the fees for the duration of their course. Living (maintenance) costs can be covered from various sources, including income from the student's employment or from a partner. Candidates should bear in mind that there will also be other expenses such as travel and short-term accommodation.

3.7 Students who are University of Cambridge employees

Candidates for a part-time course who have or expect to have an employment contract with the University of Cambridge may be eligible for a reduced University Composition fee. In order to qualify, they must:

- i. have a contract of at least 40 per cent full-time employment with the University of Cambridge (not including University Partner Institutions).
- ii. obtain a written statement of their Head of Department agreeing that they may undertake a research degree while continuing with their duties as an employee;
- iii. be able to demonstrate that their research will contribute directly to their paid employment
- iv. sign an undertaking that they understand and agree that if the employment contract comes to an end, then so will the staff rate and that they will be assessed for the remaining fees in the usual way.

The staff composition fee is currently set at one third the relevant Home composition fee regardless of the candidate's subject or other fee status.

3.8 Departmental recommendation

When recommending admission, you must attach to the application an employer's letter, a report of the interview, (see a recommended pro forma at <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/ptstudents/> and confirm that:

- there is a suitable supervisor willing to take this student on a part-time basis;
- substitute arrangements will be made available should that person not be able to supervise for the entire duration of the course;
- the topic of research can be completed on a part-time basis within 5 years;
- the topic can be reasonably expected to yield results which will make a contribution at an appropriate level to the field of study in five years' time;
- the normal Departmental attendance requirements (as agreed when opting in to the arrangements) will apply to this student, with a special case made if this is not to be so.

4 WORKING WITH PART-TIME STUDENTS

4.1 Attendance requirements

Part-time students should have *minimum* attendance requirements specified at the point of offer; progression will be conditional on these requirements having been met. Attendance in one block (e.g during the summer months) is not sufficient; students must attend and work on their studies throughout the year.

4.2 Induction

Where possible, part-time students should attend the same induction events as full-time students; however, if this is not possible alternative arrangements should be made.

4.3 Training requirements

You will need to specify your expectations regarding attendance at research training and safety seminars, weekly institutional/group seminars, etc when applying to register for the scheme. Training may be 'front-loaded' or may be spread more evenly over the first two years. Please note that transferable skills training should be made available, pro rata, to part-time students.

You should specify at what times training sessions are available. We do not necessarily expect you to duplicate the provision for full-time students. You may specify that part-time students must attend day time training sessions; alternatively you may opt to reschedule existing sessions to evenings weekends or vacations so that part -timers are able to attend.

You should set out all attendance requirements in your Handbook, and subsequently monitor attendance by means of the Progress Log.

4.4 Handbook

You should issue part-time students with a Departmental Handbook on arrival (see *Code of Practice* for Research Students). The information for part-time students may be contained within the general Departmental Handbook, or you may produce a separate handbook. It should contain information specifying the attendance and other requirements to be met and reasonable mutual expectations for the student and supervisor. While we recognise that the student-supervisor relationship cannot be mapped onto a simple template, it is clearly important for both parties to enter the partnership with a shared expectation of what is reasonable. The Handbook should also contain a timetable of progress and submission landmarks.

4.5 Progress reports

Supervisors should prepare a termly report on their part-time students on CGSRS. For more information, go to <http://www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/graduate-information-university-staff/graduate-supervision/completing-and-submitting-cgsrs-report>.

4.6 Progression

The Registration of part-time research students who begin their course not at first registered for any qualification will proceed exactly as for full-time students, but will not take place until the end of the 5th term (see Section 5).

However, a part-time student should not automatically be permitted to progress from one year to the next. At the end of **each** twelve months (both before and after Registration) the student should meet the supervisor to consider a brief but formal progress paper. The supervisor's statement should confirm that the student is on target to complete within five years and that the topic remains viable as a contribution to learning.

4.7 Examination

The examination process is exactly the same for part-time students as for full-time students. The options available to the Examiners are the same as for full-time students. The Board expects the mode of study to have no bearing on the standard of the thesis nor on the consideration of the outcome of an examination by the Examiners or by the Degree Committee.

4.8 Student support

Part-time students should have available the same Departmental and University pastoral and academic support structures as are available to full-time students. Depending on the nature of the difficulties, the student may refer to the the Director of Graduate Education within their Faculty or Department or their Graduate Tutor.

5 PROGRESS MONITORING AND DISSERTATION SUBMISSION

For part-time PhD students are required to submit their dissertation within 7 years. Further details of milestones are contained in the table below.

	Qualification	Full-time	Part-time
minimum number of terms (earliest date for submission is first day of Term shown)	PhD	9	15
	MSc/MLitt	6	10
	CPGS	3	5
minimum number of terms in Cambridge or other approved place ^{1,2}	PhD and MSc/MLitt	3	5
Final submission deadline should be the last day of the vacation following the Term shown	PhD	12 th term	21st term
Submission of CGPS dissertation should be last day of the Term shown	CPGS	3 rd term	5 th term

¹ leave to work away may be sought for the remainder

² 'other approved place' refers to approved University Partner Institutions as listed in the Graduate Studies Prospectus

5.1 The formal Registration exercise

Registration for a part-time PhD should take place by the end of the fifth term if possible and certainly by the end of the seventh term. It may take the form of formal scrutiny written work together with a review of the logbook and an oral examination. Two academic members of your institution should carry this out, neither of whom is the Supervisor (the Advisor or other members of the supervisory team may, however act as assessors)

The Supervisor will be consulted and, in the light of the assessors' verdict, a firm recommendation to the Board should be made indicating whether the project is likely to be viable and productive within the specified timescale; and whether the student is likely to submit a thesis in that time.

5.2 Early submission

Students who wish to submit their dissertation before the end of their minimum period of registration must apply for an exemption of terms. Further information is available on the Student Registry website <http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/graduate-study/your-student-status/allowanceexemption-research-terms> .

Where exemption is sought for a previous qualification, the maximum number of terms for which exemption can be allowed is 3 terms (full-time) and 5 terms (part-time), at the recommendation of the Degree Committee.

Early submission from part-time students who have no grounds for an exemption but who have been able to devote more time to their research than expected under the scheme may be permitted providing the full fee for the five-year minimum research period has been paid.

5.3 Deferral of submission

Students must submit their dissertation no later than the end of their seventh year. In exceptional cases, students may apply to defer submission to a later date. Further information can be found on the Student Registry website at <http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/graduate-study/your-student-status/extending-your-end-registration-date>

5.4 Leave to work away

Students who need to leave Cambridge, or their current place of residence, to undertake fieldwork or research must apply for permission to do so in advance. Further details, including details of how to apply, can be found on the Student Registry website at <http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/graduate-study/your-student-status/work-away-cambridge>.

No more than the equivalent of 10 part-time terms of leave to work away within the 15-term PhD research period may be permitted. Please note that Leave to Work away is not to be used simply as a means of allowing a part-time student to work at home: there must be genuine fieldwork reasons for the application.

It is possible that work away may, by its nature, be full-time research. The Degree Committee must decide whether a stint of work away will count as full-time or part-time, depending on the circumstances. In these cases the terms away will be counted as the equivalent of the following number of part-time research terms, as follows

Time away from Cambridge	Number of part-time term
Whole years	5 terms
1 term	2 terms
2 terms	3 terms

Degree Committees may agree to allow more than one change of mode in either direction (see 5.6, below) in these situations.

5.5 Intermission

Part-time students may apply to intermit in the normal way. Further details, including details of how to apply, can be found on the Student Registry website at <http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/graduate-study/your-student-status/intermission>

Unlike terms of leave to work away, for part-time research students terms lost through intermission always count as part-time terms. So a candidate who intermits for 3 university terms must continue for 3 part-time terms beyond the normal end-date of their part-time degree.

The Board can permit up to three terms of intermission at any one time and not normally more than six terms in total throughout the whole PhD. The maximum time a part-time student may be on the Register and still submit a thesis is therefore ten years.

5.6 Transfers between part-time and full-time mode

Transfer of registration mode is permitted *once only in either direction* (except as noted under 5.4 above) providing the student is still within the minimum research requirement. Transfers are not normally permitted after the end of the period for which the student is paying fees, nor as a means of avoiding either the original submission deadline or the payment of full-time fees.

The following time conversion chart shows how to calculate terms for students considering a change of mode of study. Transfers can normally be made only at the end of a full twelve months (counting from the date of start of study):

- 12 months full-time (3 full-time terms) = 5 part-time terms
- 12 months part-time (3 part-time terms) = 2 full-time terms (rounding to nearest whole number)

Further details, including information on how to apply, can be found at the Student Registry website at <http://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/graduate-study/your-student-status/changing-your-mode-study>. Candidate would need to show that change makes good sense in the context of your progress towards the degree, that you and your supervisor will be able to manage the changed work load and pattern and that your funding is secure for the whole course.

Students wishing to transfer from full-time to part-time should be aware of potential implications of doing so, as follows:

- Not all Colleges accept part-time students; a transfer may therefore necessitate a change of College;
- Students who are on Tier 4 visas are not permitted to study part-time
- Funding bodies may require students to study full-time